Amendments to the Specification:

Please insert the Abstract page beginning on page 11 into the application as the last page thereof.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 25 to read as follows:

If these alphahydroxy acid polyesters in the form of macromolecules (*viz.* PLA, PLGA or PCL) are interesting, they unfortunately have also some undesired properties, such as a high ~~hydrophobicity~~ insolubility and a negative zeta potential when used in the form of microparticles or nanoparticles. Such also gives them a high reactivity with respect to the reticulo-endothelial system.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 13 to read as follows:

PLA-based polymers having lateral carboxylic groups have already been prepared by copolymerisation with malic acid. Such malic-co-lactic polymers with pendant groups can be grafted to various molecules such as other polymers, lipids, ionisable function or antibodies. However, the preparation of these polymers requires numerous steps, including *inter alia* a necessary protection of the carboxylic groups during ~~polymerization~~ polycondensation. Another drawback is the fact that the number of reticulation bonds that may be obtained by transesterification is difficult to determine.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 3 to read as follows:

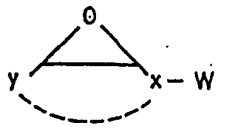
Figure 1 identified as "prior art" is a representation of three known alphahydroxy acid polyesters, namely polyactid acid (PLA), polylactic-co-glycolic acid (PLGA) and poly-caprolactone ~~(PGL)~~ (PCL).

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 17 to read as follows:

As non-restrictive examples of cyclic amide or diamide monomers (A) usable to prepare the polymers of formula I where Z is -NH-, reference can be made to:

- lactones, including β-lactones, γ-lactones, and ε-lactams; and
- dilactams, such as cyclic diglycine.

As non-restrictive examples of epoxide monomers (B), reference can be made to those of formula II:



(II)

wherein:

X is a non-functional chain optionally containing one or more heteroatoms but no ester or amide link;

W is - CH_2CH_2OH or -CH_2COOH; and

Y is H, ~~C1-C4~~ C_1-C_4- alkyl or phenyl;

X and Y being optionally linked to each other as shown in dotted lines.

As non-restrictive examples of epoxide monomers (B) of formula II, reference can be made to the following compounds:

allyl glycidyl ether;

methyl vinyl glycidyl amine;

1,2-epoxy 7-octene;

1-vinyl or alkyl 3,4-epoxy cyclohexane; and

4'-vinyl phenyl glycidyl ether.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 17 to read as follows:

In the above formula I, it is also important that the ratio of the number of units derived from monomers (B) to the total of units derived from both the monomers (A) and (B), be ranging from 0.005 to 0.30. In other words, the molar ratio m/x must range from 0.005 to 0.30. If this ratio exceeds 0.30, the obtained polymers may ~~loose~~ lose most of its advantageous properties.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 6 to read as follows:

Dilactide and alkyl glycidyl ether were mixed in a round bottom flask with tetraphenyltin as catalyst. The mixture was heated at 180°C for 6 hours. The resulting polymer was dissolved in ethylacetate and purified by precipitation in water.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 11 to read as follows:

Grafting of the ligand to the functionalizable polymers was carried out using the following sequence of steps:

- converting the free carboxylic groups of the functionalizable polymer to ~~hydrochloride~~ acid chloride groups;
- protecting all the reactive groups of the ligand;
- selectively unprotecting one of said protected groups of the ligand so that it may react with the ~~hydrochloride~~ acid chloride groups of the functionalizable polymer;
- subjecting the partially unprotected ligand and the functionalizable polymer to esterification; and
- unprotecting all the other reactive groups of the grafted ligand by catalytic hydrogenation.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 9 to read as follows:

More specifically, batches of microspheres were prepared, containing:
ungrafted polymer, β-carotene (#1);
grafted polymer 5%, Oil Blue N (#2);
grafted polymer 1%, β-carotene (#3).

150 mg of polymers were added to 1.5 ml of a 1% ~~chloroforme~~ chloroform solution of dye. The organic solution was poured drop wise in 100 ml of a 1% PVA solution under a high shear homogeniser for 3 min. After its formation, the emulsion was subjected to magnetic stirring for 2h to evaporate the organic solvent. Microspheres were collected by centrifugation (5 min, 2000) and washed three times, (yield 87%). Microspheres were dried using a fast freeze dryer.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 28 to read as follows:

Orally administrable lipids were also prepared. Grafting of these lipids with ~~palmitoleic~~ palmitic or oleic acid was successfully tested. It can be presumed that nanospheres and/or microspheres having correctly chosen lipids on their surface would allow intestinal assimilation.